

TWO  
Plain Words  
TO THE  
CLERGY:  
OR, AN  
ADMONITION  
TO  
PEACE and CONCORD  
At this Juncture.

And a few Innocent REFLECTIONS.

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*Let your Moderation be known unto all men: The Lord  
is at hand.*

*Whatever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might.  
Who may say to a King, What dost thou?  
Every thing is beautiful in its Season.*

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Allow'd of June the 28. 1688. C. N.

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LONDON, Printed in the Year, MDCLXXXVIII.

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John Gibson

TO THE

CLERGY

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LONDON Printed in the Year MDCCXCVI

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R E A D E R,

**T**HE Proverb says, Plain dealing is a Jewel, ( tho not easie to find now adays ) but he that uses it must die a Beggar; yet I take it to be every Man's Duty that is a Member of the Common-weal, tho never so mean, to do what in him lies towards the welfare thereof: And therefore have I done as the poor Widow did in another case, viz. thrown in my Two Mites ( knowing, That every little helpsto make a mickle ) among the learned Pleaders for True Christian Liberty of Conscience, which is ( in my Opinion ) only to be obtained by Repealing all Penal and Test Laws about matters of meer Religion, so that the Gospel may have a free course ( the consequence of which ( it is to be hoped ) will more unite us in our duty to the King, and in affection to one another. ) To hinder which is to destroy, as much as in us lies, the Souls for whom Christ died, and to make his precious Death and Blood of none effect. And on the contrary, the destruction of men's Bodys, and the ruin of Families, must be the consequence of keeping on foot the Penal Laws, &c. at the best but a Robbing Peter to pay Paul, as I humbly think, with all due submission. They are indeed said, by some, to be the Bullworks of the Protestant Religion; but to me they look more like the strong holds of Satan, from whence fiery Darts are thrown at the Blessed Jesus: He that toucheth you, toucheth me. Now since A Protestant Foot-Man had his Book published, and I being a converted Male-content Protestant, and no Horse-man, why, I pray ye may not my

A Book,

6 Oct 43 @ mounted



Book, or what else you'll call it, be published likewise; our temptations too perhaps bearing some resemblance. I have ventured to send two Words into the World as naked as my self came into it, hoping the Reader, from his good nature, will cover them with a Mantle of Compassion, hoping too no good man will censure me the less: Shall I care what ill men say? However pardon this first, and it may be the last. And let me beseech you, the Clergy of all Perswasions, in my plain way; and I do beseech you as Ministers and Christians, bear with my weakness; read with patience, and think of these two Words, as what flows from an honest concernedness for the good of all: and in doing so, you will not do ill.

Farewel.



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*Two Plain Words to the C L E R G Y: Or an  
Admonition to Peace and Concord at this  
Juncture.*

**N**OW that His Majesty our Gracious Sovereign and most Excellent Prince, whom God preserve: and most plentifully reward with special Blessings upon Himself, Royal Consort and Family; has granted *Liberty of Conscience* to all his Subjects, to Worship God according to their several perswasions, which now they may do, none making them afraid. Let God have the Glory, the King due Honour and Obedience; and be ye thankful to God and the King for so great a Priviledge.

For now, if ye be followers of that which is good, Who is it that dare harm you? Seek peace then and ensue it, lay aside speaking Evil and of declaiming against one another in your Sermons and Prints, all Reproachings and Bitterness, all Conceitedness of your own Parts and Opinions about the things wherein you differ; esteeming each other rather than your selves. Put on *Charity* towards your Brethren, and bowels of Compassion towards your Country and respective Flocks ( whose eyes are upon you at this juncture; more especially to see how you will behave your selves in reference to the Great and most Glorious design His Majesty has now in hand ) *Love one another*, you know it is

is our Lord Christ's new but great Commandment, *not in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth, without partiality and dissimulation, bear one anothers Burdens, and treat one another with Tenderneſs, Meekneſs, and Humility, paſſing by or bearing with the frailties of humane Nature ; Paſſions and Weakneſs of each other, not uncharitably judging or cenſuring, ſetting us an example.*

Be ye fellow helpers ( not hinderers ) of one anothers Faith ( like good Stewards of the Manifold grace of God ) endeavouring to provoke to love and good Works, the which has been too long wanting ; and ſeek not Dominion over the Faith and Conſcience of others, but, *do as you would others ſhould do unto you.* Be ye zealous for God and the good of Souls, againſt Groſs Wickedneſs and Prophaneneſs ; but have a tender regard to Weak and tender Conſcienc'd Chriſtians. Be careful that you do not vend your own Paſſions, Conceits, and Fancies for the Goſpel Truth's and Zeal ; give none offence to them who are ( in your Apprehenſions ) without, nor lay ſtumbling Blocks before thoſe that are within ; Preach the Goſpel with Plainneſs, Power, and Zeal, yet alſo affectionately, remembering alwaies that there are Babes as well as ſtrong Men ; do not cloud clear Truths with Dark and unintelligeable Notions, which perhaps neither your ſelves or others can underſtand. Let all things be done to Edification, be ye ſure to avoid ſuch Doctrines which tends only to Diviſion, and occaſions Heats and Annimofities among your ſelves and us. Remember you are not Infallible ; you had need be modeſt, very humble and ſelf denying ; there be thoſe perhaps who watch for your halting at this time Eſpecially. Let theſe things be put in practice among you, as becometh

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Ministers, Christians, honest Men, and good Subjects. Let your strife be only to do good to the Souls and Bodies of Men, and who shall communicate there unto most Liberally. Thus shall you have honour from Men, and a great reward from God, whose Embassadors you pretend to be; and if you are, then you must needs be Messengers of peace and glad tydings to Men.

You Reverend Church-men, remember your own Prayers, *From Envy, Hatred, and all Uncharitableness; From Lying, Slandering and Evil Speaking,* Good Lord deliver us.

*Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that Trespase against us, &c.*

You Reverend Non-conformists and Dissenters, who use not these Prayers, as in their form, yet teach those Doctrines contained therein, put those Doctrines in practice speedy and sincerely, with all circumspection. 'Tis a good Admonition, tho it come not to ye from the Commons.

Bear with me I beseech you. Now you that teach others, ought you not to teach your own selves: what can you imagin poor illiterate and ignorant men can judge of some of your, when we see (unless we hood-wink) you have been Partial, Lordly, Lovers of your own selves, great Boasters of your own Church-Learning and Parts, &c. despising your Brethren, stigmatizing them; and now and then as you have had, &c. smiting and wounding your fellow Servants; Lording it over God's Heritage; proud, lazy, &c. Binding heavy burdens, laying them on our shoulders till they are Gauled, that you would not touch with one of your Fingers.

plea-



Have not some of you minded your own things and pleasures, neglecting the things of others, and your Flocks; and instead of feeding, have not you fleeced them; if not actually, yet have instigated others, not barely to fleece but even flea them that could not conform to your Rites and Modes in Worship, tho you knew they were otherwise honest men and good Subjects; there be too many woful Instances of it; if true, humble your selves. Is it false? I wish it were for your own sakes. This is plain and honest dealing; I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say; be not angry at it: *Anger rests in the bosom of Fools.* Remember they that sin openly, may be rebuked openly; but perhaps 'tis none of my Province, tho it be so; yet it will not harm you to tell you a little of the truth; and as yet, I have not seen any of your own Function has done it, so may be the better excused; nor is it because I am blameless, no; I have faults: *He that has no sin, let him throw the first stone.* However, be you advised, at least, not to bite and devour, least ye be devoured.

Now let me beseech you one another to have a special care at this Juncture, That you do not provoke God as formerly, by such things which is not to be told in *Gath*, nor published in the Streets of *Ascalon*; nor the King by your perverseness, whose Royal Heart you may see is enclined to favour all His Subjects impartially, and is like to be the Healer of our Breaches, and Restorer of *True Christian Liberty*, to these so long distracted Nations; which sure all Good-men, and more especially you, who are Teachers and Ministers, should be much affected with, and rejoyce greatly for, rather than repine and grumble at it, as 'tis too evident some do; *Which is like (pardon the comparison) the Dog in the*

*the Manger, that cannot eat the Hay therein, nor will suffer the hungry Horse to feed on it. Have not some of you ( 'tis so notorious I cannot but mind you of it ) enveighed bitterly against the Non-conformists and Dissenters ; for, as you said, Speaking evil of Dignities, and complaining even then when they were under cruel Oppressions and Persecution. And will you now be guilty of the same, nay, worse things ? All circumstances duly considered, they complained when sorely pinched, you mutter and grumble when no body hurts you, nor are like to do ; such as are guilty be ashamed and now be wiser, if you can. Who would think that men of any sence, learning, or good nature should be ( had they but a grain of honesty ) guilty of such envy and horrid madness, as 'tis apparent ( some have been ) both from the Pulpit and Prefs, witness, *The Letter to a Dissenter*, full of fine pollish'd words, but foul and base Reflections on — &c. to say no worse, wicked surmizings, and false but subtle suggestions and supposals, &c. the which was industriously, not to say villanously dispierced among the unthinking and easie people, who do not see, because suspect not the Snake hid under the dazling Rhetorick, that has debauched the minds of thousands, who did before rejoyce at the King's Grace and Clemency to his Subjects of all Perswasions. O that men were wise, that they would but consider who it is that has so bewitched them, that they should oppose their own Mercies. It may be feared that the prize, yea, such a prize as now is put into the hands ( by our wise and gracious King ) of the people of *England*, if they, like fools, have not a heart to use it, perhaps may never be put into their hands again. Consider it, if we be so much insatuated as to lose this*



opportunity ( which God forbid ) of throwing off those heavy yokes which has so long gaul'd the Necks of the People of these Kingdoms, will it not be just that our Yoke be made heavier, and our bands stronger, and the Proverb be made good ( viz. ) *The Rod is for the Back of such Fools* : Pray take the hint ; be wise in time, and consider, 'tis wholsom counsel ; do not despise it.

What was it, I beseech you, some of you pray'd for in your Calamity, when you were groaning under your pressures, sighing and looking up ; was it not that you might have the *Liberty* of your *Conscience*, the Public Ordinances in peace and quietness, be protected in your solemn Assemblies, and enjoy the Gospel with your Properties, and the comforts of this life ? And have the favour from your King and Governors, to share with your fellow Christians and Subjects, in the blessings God is pleased to bestow upon us. And has not God answered your desires in as full a manner, as perhaps ever any was ; Nay, beyond what you asked or hoped for ? Is it so ? and will any of you now, by your foolish fears and distrust of God ( and a gracious Prince ) provoke him to lay you under your old Woes and Miseries again ; If so, who will pity you ? Nay, will not your old Adversaries laugh you to scorn, and point at you ( in your Calamities ) *Those are they that we Wheedled and Bugbear'd out of their Wits and Liberty* ? Have a care, you know Mrs. James, the Church of England Mens Mouth, would have the Rod ready upon the Mantle-piece. You cannot forget neither their old Theam, ( viz. ) *The Church of England is Crucified between two Thieves* ; and who those Thieves are, all know. Now consider a little, *Can the Leopard change his Spots ? Can they*



they who have been so long accustomed to do evil, learn to do well? Know we not what their tender mercies are? Can men be on Christ's side, and on the Persecutors too at the same time! Can the Dissenters Love Persecution, so as to chuse it? (Much good may do their Hearts) no sure, tho it be their duty to love there Enemies, yet I do not see that 'tis either duty or wisdom to love Whips and Scorpions. No affliction is for the present joyous but grievous.

Be wise; have a care of the Royal Thunder, *The Letter to a Dissenter threatens*, &c.

Such of you that shew discontent, &c. let me ask you softly, what you would have? Would you have *Liberty of Conscience* in matters of meer Religion? Why, the King has given it you. Would you have power again to Persecute and ruin your fellow Subjects, and even Christians, and to tyrannize over your honest and innocent Neighbours, whom we should love as our selves? The King (God be praised) in his Princely wisdom and goodness, will not permit you so wickedly and inhumanly to do. Is this it that cuts, that angers, and puts you out of humour, and into such a high ferment, turns your sweet *Wine* into sour *Vinegar*, &c. Sure it would be thought by some to be too severe a Reflection to assert it; but if so, Why?

Then be entreated to do as *Men* that are wise, honest and good should do in such a case (*viz.*) Publish your dislike of that *Letter to a Dissenter*; shew your selves Abhorrrers once again (you have now a fitter occasion for't) I mean that you are Abhorrrers of Persecution, or as some have phrased it, to extenuate Prosecutions for God's sake, and abhorrrers of such Laws as have but a tendency to it: I am apt to

think His Majesty would commend such Abhorrrers; and would hope too, that no man is so much beside himself, as to desire *Liberty* to do any Villany, and not be prosecuted for it. But to return.

Let all the World know that you are ( now your blood's cool ) fully convinced, that 'tis Antichristian and inhuman too, to persecute your Brethren, and ruin your Neighbours and Friends too; an aggravation that you are heartily ashamed of, and truly sorry for; what of this nature may be justly charged upon you: for if you do not thus declare, Who can help thinking that you would fall to your beloved work again, I mean persecuting, and Religious Plundering; and that you are so very ill natur'd that you cannot sleep in quiet unless you have power to do Mischief. Are you not yet ashamed? Be Ingenious and declare ( you have wit enough, as much honesty would set your Tongues a wagging as fast on this Subject, as they used to do when you declaimed against the *Non-Cons* ) That you are Abhorrrers of speaking against, or so much as thinking evil of our gracious King for His Clemency to his poor oppressed Subjects, who stood in so much need of it; and who are thereby the most obliged to render to him all the good services and humblest thanks they are capable of, for delivering them out of the Paw of the *Lyon* and the *Bear*, the cruel Claws of *Penal Laws and Tests*. And too, that you are Abhorrrers of those silly, if not envious pretences. Some excuse their Persecutions with ( viz. ) That they were put upon it by the ———— &c. Which, as some think, is as false as 'tis a base and criminal reflection: But Oh, the Brags of some mens Foreheads!

Let

Let all men know that you do account the King's favour and grace, in granting the *Liberty* aforesaid, worthy of so great, so wise, good and generous a Prince; and to be accepted with, with all chearful thankfulness, and that your Eye is not Evil, because His Majesty's is good.

Declare such things in your *Pulpits* and *Prints*, in your Discourses with your Friends, and in all Companies where there is fit occasion offered.

And further, That it is the duty of all men in their respective Stations and Places, to use all lawful means and endeavours to get all impediments ( tho *Tests* ) removed out of the way, that may hinder the establishing that glorious *Liberty*, by a *Magna Charta*, which our excellent King, to His immortal Honour, has promised to endeavour, and does hope to effect so, *As that it shall not be in the Power of any of His Successors to alter.* Good God grant he may not be frustrated in so blessed a design, by a perverse and self-ended sort of men, *Who care not who sink, so they may swim in Mirth and Jollity.* Let others drown in Tears, who make their *Tests* an *Idol*; and it may be wished, that they do not ( only ) *Worship* it; to which sure all Loyal Hearts will say, *Amen.*

If, as has been said, you do not make it appear by such waies as has been hinted at, talk and pretend what you will, without breach of Charity, all knowing, unbiassed, and uninteressed persons ( if not bewitched with your Hypocritical pretences ) must conclude against you, *That it is not fear of Popery, nor Persecution from the Papists; No, nor yet, That the King has a contrary end in having the Penal Laws and Tests Repealed,*



pealed, to what He has graciously declared. But indeed, That you fear His Majesties sincerity, and that it is parting with the *Instruments of Cruelty* : that is your fore agrievance ! Is it so ? Are you yet unconcerned ? Have we not cause then to weep in secret for your Pride, Hard-heartedness, and Cruelty ?

Now if there be among you any that have suffered by the *Penal and Test Laws*, that yet are against taking off the *Tests*, from no other ground but that of Doubt ; such are ( as I humbly think with submission ) to be pitied and blamed both : blamed for suspecting — &c. And I do believe, without cause, but pitied for their folly, in being wheedled and bubbled by their Adversaries into a confederacy against their own and other mens happiness. Methinks such men should consider, That tho some men have insinuated ( cunningly enough ) that they are sorry for what has been done, and poor Souls were put upon by the — &c. against their inclinations ( he would be begged for a fool that believes it ) and will do so no more ; no, no, yet for all this, I say, should consider, That the Persecutors Nature is not changed ; no, nor yet famed.

Reverend Sirs, I am not so vain as to think that any thing said by me, is, what you do not know, or that there are not fitter persons than I to admonish, &c. especially you ; yet as I have an honest end in this ; so likewise, I hope, you will not scorn to be minded of these things from an illiterate hand ; you will however have this advantage by it, to know which perhaps you may be ignorant of, that such mean Creatures do observe your motions, and have a little concernedness for the Weal-public. This by the way.

What

What! has the King promised to secure to you that which is dearer, I question not, than your very lives, and that by an unalterable *Law* too, if the wisdom and power of a Parliament can do it? And will not men believe Him? Be so-wise as put it to the Trial; Shew your selves ready to comply with His Majesty in this matter; be patient till the King is pleased to call a Parliament to consider and deliberate upon it. Very strange, methinks, men carry it in this weighty matter, like a little Boy in Coats, whose Master bid to say his Lesson: the Boy was unwilling to it, and pretended his Master would put too hard a Task upon him (*viz.*) to make him say to the bottom of the Leaf: the Master condescends to promise he should but say to a mark he made, &c. and no further than it; the Boy was full of fears and jealousies; very childish, and would not say at all. The consequence was, That the Boy was whipt, and made to say to the bottom too, &c. This the Boy got for his trespass and folly. But now, What shall we that are past Coats, and got into Breeches, and some of us huge great Boys too, get for our worse than folly, if we thus dispute it with our gracious Sovereign, whose condescension is admirable, and His Clemency not to be parallel'd. But we are afraid: Of what? That the King will not perform His Word, are you? Why, you have read the Letter to a Dissenter; well, and you will believe his Insinuations rather than the *Word of a King*? I would hope you are not in earnest. Can any man that's honest himself, disbelieve another man, tho but his equal, in any thing of moment? Would not any man be touched, if he should be mistrusted, as aforesaid. Pray how



how much should the King? Pray think on't, and remember, *Charity thinketh no evil, hopeth all things, &c.* The best and not the worst construction ought to be put on all things that the matter will bear, especially on the words and actions of a Prince.

But besides the King's gracious Promises reiterated to us, we may, as I think, observe a convincing Argument which might force a belief that the King is cordial: for he says, *That it has been His Opinion, and that for a long time too, that Conscience ought not to be forced in matters of meer Religion; 'Tis His Majesties fixed Judgment; and sure we cannot help thinking, that the King does know that 'tis true Policy and Piety too, to secure Liberty of Religious Worship, and that it will prove a better guard to His Person and Crown too, than any arm of flesh can be. Had an Indulgence been granted by King Charles the First, those dreadful Confusions in his Reign, in all probability, had been prevented (I think His Majesty has hinted some such thing in his gracious Declaration) for if men be secured, their Religion and Property, What can any Jack Straw colour a Pretence to a Rebellion with? 'Tis oppression makes wise men mad and uneasie. But the Church of Rome is for Persecution (it were well if the Church of England might not be too justly charged on the same account) but what of that; 'tis the King of England, and not the Pope of Rome, that is our supreme Governour. Nor matters it what you object of Queen Marys not performing her Promise, for her Promise was in order to get into her Throne; but our King, when He was actually on His, and none to oppose Him. Besides His Promise*  
is



is grounded on Principles of true Piety and Policy too, and therefore we can have no reason to suspect that His gracious Promises are from ill or contrary ends, to what He has so often declared. Make a Truce with your Passions, and let Reason be consulted, and see then, if you have any but imaginary fears only.

Sure such men as has been under the lash and smarted, should be easie to be entreated, and to tremble at a thought of rejecting such transcendent Clemency, and being twice fool'd in an Age by their Oppressors.

But the *Tests*, the *Tests* are our great security; take away the *Tests*, and who knows what may come afterward; why, it is rational enough to suppose that peace and ease to Dissenters will become a better security to the Protestant Religion. That many blessings from Heaven may come, &c. But on the other hand, if the *Tests* be still continued, who knows but that the *Penal Laws* may be continued too; and what the consequence of that will be, is worth your most deliberate thoughts. Perhaps something might be truly said, would startle you, *But all truth is not to be spoken at all times.*

But thus much I hope may be said, that as thinking men as your selves, does not think the *Tests* are so great a security as the King intends to give us; and whoever doth not duly consider what has been published by several on this Subject, must be convinced that a better Security may be had (if the King pleaseth) if Interest, Prepossession, and prejudice has not shut up their understandings, *Is not a Wall of*

Stone a better Fence than one of Mudd? Have we not seen the ill and bitter effects of *Penal Laws*, and may again feel, to our sorrow, one time or other, if the opportunity be lost of Repealing them, and getting a better security in lieu of them, for the Protestant Religion, than such mischievous snares are, in which thousands of honest and good Subjects have been taken, to the ruin of them and their innocent Children, who knew not their Right from their Left hand. Be serious in this weighty matter; 'tis of extraordinary moment. What do you think will be the consequence of not closing with the King in this great and glorious design, and effecting it, but at least, we and the Children unborn, will have cause to curse a besotted, befooled and ungrateful Generation? Needs a Christian Church such Rotten Pillars to support it as Sanguinary Laws are? Where's our *Faiths Defender*, is He a sleep or negligent? Is his Arms shorned, that it cannot save? Surely no; a Mother possibly may forget her Child, but Christ cannot possibly forget the concerns of His Church and People; nor that He has promised, *That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*; so that I think it cannot be made to appear that He ever gave a Commission to any man or men, either to kill mens Bodies, or ruin men in their Estates, &c. for Nonconformity to such Rites and Ceremonies, as fallible men shall invent. 'Tis marvellous that men, foolish men, think themselves wiser than God; and dare be so vain and presumptuous. Must we *Nothings* make Laws for Gods? Must we pretend to be more careful of Souls than He? Must we bring men into bondage, whom He has set at Liberty?

Must



Must we constrain ( by force and Rigor ) men, Christian men, to our foppery and fancies? Must we use carnal instead of spiritual weapons; compel men to act against their Light and Consciences, when an inspired Apostle has said, *Whatever is not of Faith, is sin?* And too, let every man be perswaded in his own mind; good reason, for every man must stand and fall to his own Master. Ay, but Christ said, *Compel them to come in*: that was to a Feast; but 'tis our compellers kindness and good nature to compel us to Starve, or Feast, to the wounding of *Conscience*; or else to use us like Rogues or Criminals. Do you not all of you Teach, *We must not do evil that good may come?* Is not continuing Soul and Body, destroying ( in their consequence ) Laws Evil, whether the King ( I had like to have said God ) will or no, for meer Religion? Argue it off if you can, seeing ( as I think ) it is so. Then I beseech you that are Ministers and Teachers, to endeavour to perswade men to do their Duty in complying with His Majesty, to have all the *Penal Laws and Tests* too abolished, and in having a Universal Law of Liberty Established. Deny your selves in this great matter; let not carnal interest sway you so much, as, God wot, it has done. None of you nor us know whether our Children may not prove to be of an opinion obnoxious to the Established Religion, whatever it is or may be. Be not so very much concern'd for your own selves only, but have an eye to posterity. God be thanked the King is willing to break every Yoke to set the oppressed free, to secure our Posterity too from Oppression for Conscience sake. Be you ingenious, and readily and joyfully



too embrace our Kings gracious offers : let Him see that you can ( as certainly you have reason ) trust Him ; His abundant goodness already manifested ; call for it, and highly deserves it. Be you not faithless but believing ; away with evil surmizings and distrust ; 'tis the wicked is said to fly when none pursue. The Lord God has promised , *King shall be our Nursing Fathers* : Is not our gracious King such ? Do not distrust him ; do not disoblige Him. *The wrath of a King is like the Roaring of a Lyon. Who may say to Him, What dost thou ?*

Labour to get this Great Work, so happily, and to a wonder begun, perfected : 'tis a good work indeed ; the helping it forward, will redound much to your account at that day, when some shall call to the deaf Rocks to cover them from the presence of Him whom here, here, I say, they Persecuted. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ; in as much as you did it to these, you did it unto me.* 'Tis worth thinking on.

One Instance now by the by ; to shew how some men have been mistaken, &c. An Independant Minister in the year 1663. Preaching in a private House to his Congregation, or Church, where they had by stealth assembled, urged very strenuously, That all Plots and Confederacies against the Government, were works of Darkness, Hatch'd in Hell, and God would never own or prosper them. And that the way of Duty, was the only way of safety, &c. but being discovered, the Congregation was dispersed, and he hurried to Prison, &c. Was it not profound Policy ? Pardon the digression, and let me ask, What will

will please, if protection from Violence, Security of Religion and Property, will not? Ay, that would please some, if therewith they might but have the *Tests and Penal Laws* too, ready on the Mantle-piece to Whip the froward and Non-conformable, &c. 'Tis well you are understood, Gentlemen. But there be some good natur'd Souls that pretend, That if they could be secured against the Papists persecuting of them, they would part with the very *Tests*. Are you in earnest? Yes; well then, if you be, pray hearken: Has not the King graciously condescended to tell us, That 'tis His design to give us all the security against them, that the Wisdom of a Parliament can reasonably contrive; and can we suffer our selves to think the King and Parliament cannot find a way to do it? Or, can we think, without a crime, that the King does not know what He says, or that He speaks like some of you (unadvisedly?) or rather is not this a Pretext to hide your malice, I had almost said, but you will question the King's sincerity; that's base and unworthy. How dare any one do that? Is there any ground for it? That man's Honesty is to be questioned, that questions his uprightness, but not the King's Word: Is the Word of a King to be disbelieved? For very shame! Was he not stiled *JAMES* the *Just*? Was there then reason for it? Is the King changed? No; what may be the reason then of your change, is it not easie to say, unless it be because of His Goodness and Clemency to His suffering and oppressed Subjects, whose cries went up to Heaven against their cruel Oppressors; reached the Ears of God, who heard them, and saw their Tears poured forth be-



before Him, when under the Tortures of *Penal Laws and Tests*, the Church of *England* mens Bullwork (if not their Idols) and dearly beloved Gins; their Church Utensils, which drained their Neighbours Purfes, and squeezed the very Marrow out of the Bones of them; and for what cause? Even because they Worshipped that God (in a different Mode from them) whom they also pretend to Worship and Adore. Is this true? Blush at it and be ashamed, and do no more so wickedly.

And now Gentlemen, as the case at present stands, I think it not altogether impertinent to advise you to think well of that Text you so frequently made use on against the Dissenters, tho you brought it in by Head and Shoulders (*viz.*) *Who may say to a King, What dost thou? And that too, What hast thou to do to take My Word into thy Mouth, since thou hatest to be Reformed.* These Texts are, with submission, as useful Subjects to treat on, as in other times, and might be at least as applicable to you as they were to the Dissenters. What account can any of you give to God or Man for your disobedience to the King's just and equitable Commands, and of your base ingratitude, and fears of I know not what; and setting us together by the Ears.

Whither away Gentlemen? What is't you would? Would you have an Angel sent from Heaven to Govern? Well, suppose you had, could you expect more from Him than to be protected in your Religion, Persons, and Estates, as *Men*, as *Christians*? Or would you be all Kings? stay a little, and be but patient: continue in Faith and well-doing to the end, and then, then, I say,



I say, you may expect to have *Crowns of Righteousness*, yea *Massy Crowns*, far excelling any *Earthly Diadems*, in another but better World than this is. Let the hopes of that quiet and prevail with you, to trust in God, and yield all due honour and obedience to a gracious King in this great Affair.

Pray take my scatter'd thoughts as they occur ; they are not strained but free.

'Tis common to say ( now ) to the Dissenters ; well, well, do not you think the King granted this Indulgence out of love to you. You'l fare no better than the Church of *England* men ; never expect it. Good ; truly the Dissenters, I think at least, are not so fond or shallow to expect to fare so well altogether as they ; nor do I think they are so far gone yet as to think the King did it for their sakes only : He had no reason so to do ; nor can they be so vain as think they deserved any favours from Him, or shall have any from the Persecutor, much less could they expect such transcendent Clemency from a Prince whom they know very well was their great Dread, and whom they had not, ( through their ignorance of His Majesties inate goodness and great Wisdom ) one good word for, or good thought of ; neither can they now do less than shew to all the World their high esteem of, and value for Him, and of His admirable Vertues and excellent conduct, they find now and plainly see their mistake ; and 'tis obvious to them now that His Majesty is as an Angel of God to decern. His Majesty knew their disaffection to Him, was not because such a Person, but because of His being of such a Religion, which is charged with holding, *That no Faith is to be*  
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kept with Hereticks. But no sooner did His Majesties Worth and superabounding Excellencies appear to them, but even the fairest of them were thereby subdued, and the most obdurate made flexible. Such wonderful effects wrought His Majesties gracious Declaration of Indulgence upon them; this I ground not on common Observations only, but also upon the experience I have of the Truth of that in the *Proverbs* ( viz. ) *As the Face answers the Face in the Water, so does the Heart of Man answer the Heart of Man.* You see I judge of other Men ( in this case ) by my self.

And as 'tis rightly said in His Majesties Declaration of the Twenty Seventh of April last past ( viz. ) *That He is not that Prince His Enemies would have made the World afraid of :* So I say, with Reverent awe, He has not proved to be that Prince of that Temper, nor yet of that Opinion the generality of Dissenters took Him to be; nor are they ( I hope it now appears ) those ill and undeserving People their adversaries represented them; Aye, in this as also in former Reigns; and it were to be wished ( tho perhaps not hoped for ) that the high flown Church-men were not the men they have heretofore been, and continue still to be.

To change from worse to better, is praise worthy; to change from better to worse, is blame worthy; to be thankful for small favours, is commendable: but to be unthankful for so great Clemency, and that from our Natural and Gracious Sovereign, too, is ————— &c.

Have



Have we not been truly told, That 'tis a great sin to surmise evil of our Governours; and has not the Dissenters been frequently charged with it as a great Crime. And is it not an evil surmizing with a witness, to suspect the King, notwithstanding the many promises His Majesty has made, and that His Design is to make all His Subjects happy. Sure the words of a King should have had more Credit, and wrought better effects upon Men, who value themselves for their steady and unshaken Loyalty, and have run down all others as persons Disloyal and disaffected to the Government. But its now seen well enough what were their Motives, &c.

One would even think that such condescension and Grace, as the best and wisest of Kings has so clearly demonstrated to His Subjects, should rather have caused an honest Emulation among all sorts of men to out-do one another in expressions of affection and Loyalty to so gracious and truly generous a Prince; and have engaged their Prayers (as doubtless it has) of all good men for a Blessing on His Royal Person, and good Success in so great and excellent a Work, as establishing *Liberty of Conscience* is; letting the Oppressed go free, and causing such as mourned to rejoyce.

You more especially should endeavour to further the Work, who above others have the advantage to do it infinitely more than we poor nought Set-bys can, would we never so fain, because your Hearers rely much on you as their Guides, therefore should you endeavour your uttermost to dispose your selves and others also to it, that so His Majesties gracious intentions in securing us and our Posterity from the Out-



rages of unreasonable men ( may not be hindred ) who have no Faith in any thing but *Tests and Penal Laws* ; and perhaps *Loves to Fish in troubled Waters*, and in *Persecuting*, &c. But if such men find profit, take pleasure in Confusion and Blood, the natural consequence of Persecution. Yet others not only dread but smart still under the dismal effects of such dreadful Calamities ; and if you now who ought to be Messengers of Peace , should be the Trumpeters of War ( which God forbid ) would not the Children yet unborn have cause to curse instead of blessing you. 'Tis worth a pause, pray think on't. But so far have some men swerved from ( and not of the least Figure ) their boasted Loyalty, when the stream ran with them ) that they have not modesty enough left them to express themselves in decent words——To the King's Promise, they say, *Pish, we will not believe*, &c. *let Him say what He will ; He Designs to set up Popery*. This is not ingenious ; 'tis not to be imagined that the true Sons of the Church of *England* should so forget themselves. No, who can believe it ? Those who have heard. Is't not to be feared ( that if God do not endue the King with more than ordinary Wisdom, and Self-denial too ) He will not endure such base Affronts and Indignities ? ) 'Tis in effect to say, *Sir, You Lye* ; which among us deserves a Stab, we say. But I am warm.

But thanks to the Almighty, our King has given ( all things duly considered ) such proofs of His Goodness and firm Resolution to maintain His gracious Declaration, as should cause us to believe that His Majesty will not be provoked to suffer himself to recede from His  
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gracious purposes, notwithstanding the Jealousies of some honest but misled Souls. And the base Ingratitude of other Domineering, *Self* and *Dominion* seeking men ; but rather in imitation of God whose Vicegerent He is, overcome Evil with Good, than render to us according to our folly : which God grant.

How was the Restoration of the late King admired ? Should not the Restoration of true Christian Liberty by this King, be much more marvelous in our Eyes ? Would it be less than the greatest provocation to God, and the highest Affront to Heaven ? The worst of ingratitude to a gracious King, and an irreparable mischief to the numerous Inhabitants of these Nations. Nay, to all the Christians ( in consequence ) throughout the Universe, to despise and reject so great and transcendent a Blessing. And could we in that case look for any thing but the severest Plagues to follow such a wilful, crooked, and God-rejecting People, till they are utterly cut from off the face of this Earth, and from under these Heavens.

Be wise therefore, O ye People, and hearken to the Voice of God by His Vicegerent, who calls you to *Liberty from Bondage ; to safe Protection under His gentle Government, from the Violence of Irreconcilable Adversaries ; to sit under the cool shade, out of the scorching Heat.* Have not many of you been severely stung by fiery Serpents. *Hearken then to the Voice of the Charmer.* Turn not a deaf Ear, like the poisoned Adder, but obey the King's Call in assisting Him to set up the Brazen Serpent, on which you need but look and be healed. Behold you Despisers and wonder, for a marvelous thing is done in *England* ; the hearing of



which has caused all Ears to Tingle (*viz.*) *The Oppressed are set free, &c.* Bless God; comply with His Majesty in getting the Work (He has so graciously begun) perfected, that so King and People may be ever happy in each other, to all Generations.

You that are Dissenters, shew your selves men: Men who have reason; you who have been traduced, reproached, rendred unworthy of the favour of your King; Rebellious, Factious, Disturbers of the Peace, whom no favors could oblige, no clemency reclaim; men obstinate and perverse, beyond amendment; yea the very Pests and Plagues of the Government——  
See *Observers*, and *Southwark* Presentation, 1684. acquit your selves like men of understanding (at this Juncture) and true Loyalty stop the mouthes of your Adversaries by shewing to all the World, that you can (as well as your Neighbours) be content with *Gospel Liberty*, and be as Loyal, as ready too when the King calls you to it, to serve Him with your Lives and Fortunes (and perhaps more faithfully) as they, now you have an opportunity to confute that Calumny (*viz.*) that nothing less than the Government will content you; make it appear by your honest Conversation and Loyalty, that it was Oppression, and other Provocations, which made you uneasie and mad, and was the cause of former Confusions, and not Toleration, as has been often but falsely suggested. It seems evident, That *Persecution for matters of meer Religion, was the cause, at least the chief cause, of all those unhappy and dismal Troubles that has befallen Church and State in all times hitherto, and not a Liberty to Worship God according to mens different Perswasions.*



If this be so, and few will deny it ; What can then be thought of such men, that would still continue *Penal Laws*, the true occasions of disturbance to the *Government*, and destruction of *Love, Peace, and Friendship* among our selves ; the loss of many brave mens lives, and the ruin of many Families. But you'll say, 'Tis not taking off the *Penal Laws* that's now stuck at, but we can have nothing *Equivolent* in lieu of the *Tests*, to secure us against the *Persecution* of the Papists ; no, there can be no such thing : pray read the *Three LETTERS* for Answer to this plausible pretence, there you'll find as much said as may stay your stomachs till a Parliament take the matter into their Consideration.

However the Dissenters should and do most of them, consider His Majesties unparrallel'd *Clemency* in turning their Captivity as He has graciously done ; and then too, when they neither sought it, nor so much as hoped for it ( they were like men that dreamed when the blessed ( Declaration came forth. ) Nay too, when His Majesty had vanquished that dangerous Rebellion of *Monmouth's*, and thereby had fixed His Crown the more steadily ; and too, had——&c. when too, nothing but the most doleful things was looked for ; and truly all things considered, What else could be expected ? For my own part, I think ( having weighed these things ) that such men as are fooled by the subtle insinuations of their Persecutors into a Jealousie of the King's insincerity ( if any such be ) and an aversion against taking off the *Penal Laws and Tests*, are fitter for *Bethlehem* than a share in the King's Grace and Favour, especially considering how they have been traduced and harrassed on the one Side, and obliged on the other,

other, not only by a *Gracious Indulgence*, but that too to be perpetuated, if a Parliament can be had will do it.

Did not King *Charles* the Second, and a Protestant King too, press the Parliament to make good His Promise from *Breda* for *Liberty of Conscience*, again and again? And pray who was it that not only repulsed Him, but made more Laws against *Tender Consciences*? and yet some men have the Foreheads to say that they were not for Persecution, nor force in matters of meer Religion; it was not the Church but the Law that was put in Execution against Dissenters, &c. What wild fetches are these? May not all the Persecutors in all Ages, be as well excused? Was it not the saying of those that Persecuted *the Lord of Life*? Are not they as excusable on this account (*viz.*) *We have a Law, and by our Law, He ought to Die.*

Tho it be said, *One Swallow makes no Summer*; yet it is said too, *That as the Face answers the Face in Water, so does the heart of man*, as is before noted. Therefore I'll give you an Instance, by which you may see how soon our Clergy-men are shaken in mind, and change their note (*viz.*) The next Sunday after this blessed King's Coronation, in *Henry* the Seventh's Chappel, one was Preaching on this Text, *If ye be followers of that which is good, who is it that will harm you?* And that was *Pelling*. And said, *Who, there is a Jesuiter and a Covenant-ter; a Ravilac and a Rumbold; a Kaitsby and a Cromwel* (as I think) and four or five Cooples more brought in in Rhime, what ever was the reason, *would harm you.* But (mark) now we need not fear the Jesuiter and Covenantanter, nor any of them; for we have



have a Prince has promised to protect our Religion. And by two *immutable* things our Prince has confirm'd His Promise ; First, in His *Most Gracious Speech to His Privy Council*. And again, at the *High Altar* by an Oath when He was Crown'd, *That He would Protect our Religion*. So that we having such Promises from so gracious a Prince need not to fear, &c. Well, very good ; I am of the mind now you were then, and see no reasons you have to change your mind ; if you have, pray bless the World with them ; but one would think you have less reason rather, because the King has since then, you know, confirm'd His Promises, by even a *First and Second Declaration* too : Aye, but He has promised in them to protect the Dissenters too. *That's sad indeed ; but be content ( said Pelling ) with what you have, since you cannot have what you would ( viz. ) the Scourge to lash your Friends and honest Neighbours with.* I have not given this Instance of this Preachment to upbraid, but to shew how mutable our Gown-men are, and how soon put out of their Biass and Humour.

I'll conclude with what I find in a Book called, *The More Excellent Way : Through Pride comes Contention ; and Contention has brought us to Confusion : And blessed be the Lord for it, whose immediate Hand we may now expect to restore us, and to create His own Order amongst us again.* Men generally labour to *action* People, but not to *foundation* them aright in *act*ing. Some foolishly labour to make men conform to their Wills by the Power of Magistracy ; and others that have not that power by the Curse of the Law : but rarely is it seen, that any endeavour to draw hearts to Obedience by the Power of Christ.



As I begun with a hearty desire of a Blessing on our Gracious King and Royal Family, so will I end with as hearty a desire that our Clergy-men would at last be-think themselves, and all other Persons also of all Ranks and Qualities, *To seek Peace, and ensue it.* Study to be quiet; dispose themselves and others to a cheerful Compliance with our most Wise, Excellent, Gracious, and Generous Prince, in His great and Christian-like Design, in Abolishing all *Penal and Test Laws*, and Establishing a *LAW* of equal *Liberty* in those His Majesties Dominions, which may never be Abrogated while the Sun and Moon endures. *Amen.*

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